

October 6, 2026

Don't Look Away

October Series: Love Your Neighbor

Week Focus: Look Around

Scripture – James 2:15–16 — *“Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,’ but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it?”*

Devotional Reflection

Yesterday challenged us to **slow down enough to notice** the people God has already placed around us. But noticing is only the beginning. There are times when we are fully aware that someone is struggling, hurting, or in need, yet we still find ways to continue with our day. James confronts this directly. The person in his example is not unaware of the need. They see it clearly enough to acknowledge it and even offer kind words. The problem is that what they see never affects what they do. **Sometimes the problem isn't that we don't see. Sometimes we see and keep going.**

This is one of the uncomfortable truths within Jesus' story of the Good Samaritan. The priest saw the wounded man. The Levite saw him too. Scripture does not tell us why they passed by, so we do not need to assign motives Jesus did not give us. What the text does tell us is enough: **they saw him and continued on their way.** That should cause us to examine our own lives. Have we become so accustomed to seeing certain needs that they no longer affect us? Have we noticed someone struggling but assumed somebody else would respond? Have we offered good words when God may have also given us an opportunity to take a faithful step?

This does not mean that every need you see becomes your responsibility. You are not called to solve every problem, carry every burden, or respond personally to every situation. There are needs you will encounter that require resources, expertise, or involvement beyond what God has entrusted to you. Wisdom still matters. Boundaries still matter. But there is an important difference between **recognizing our limitations and using our limitations as permission for indifference.** “I cannot do everything” should never quietly become “therefore, I will do nothing.”

Today, allow what you notice to become a question before God. Instead of immediately looking away, dismissing the need, or assuming someone else will handle it, pause and ask, **“Lord, is there something faithful You would have me do here?”** Sometimes the answer may be to pray. Sometimes it may be to listen, encourage, connect someone with help, or meet a practical need. And sometimes wisdom may tell you that you are not the person who should become directly involved. The goal is not to respond to everything. The goal is to become the kind of person who no longer automatically looks away. **You don't have to do everything, but when God allows you to see something, be willing to ask whether there is something faithful you can do.**

FOCUS FOR TODAY

Don't let "I can't do everything" become an excuse for doing nothing when God has placed a faithful response within your reach.

PRACTICE

- Think about **one need you have noticed recently** but may have quickly moved past.
 - Bring that situation before God instead of assuming you already know what your response should be.
 - Ask: **"Lord, is there an appropriate step You would have me take?"**
 - If there is something faithful within your ability to do, be willing to act on it.
 - If the situation is beyond your ability or responsibility, pray for the person and ask God for wisdom about whether you can appropriately connect them with someone who can help.
-

PRAYER

Father, thank You for continuing to change the way I see the people around me. Forgive me for the times I have recognized someone's need but chosen to keep moving because I was busy, uncomfortable, uncertain, or assumed someone else would respond. Keep my heart from becoming indifferent to the needs I regularly see.

Give me wisdom so that I do not try to carry responsibilities You have not given me, but also give me courage so that wisdom never becomes an excuse for doing nothing. When You place an opportunity before me, help me recognize the next faithful step. Teach me to see people with compassion and to allow the transformation You are doing within me to become visible through the way I respond.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

REFLECTION QUESTION

What have you noticed lately that you may have been tempted to keep walking past, and is there an appropriate, faithful response God may be asking you to make?